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ABSTRACT

In response to the Ministry of Education and Training Discussion Paper on Apprenticeship Reform, the Council of Presidents of the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario presented a new vision for apprenticeship in Ontario. The 21st century apprenticeship system aims to remove barriers and enable workers to successfully adjust and cope with rapid change in the workplace and labor market. In order to accomplish this, the paper addresses the need to be employer driven, encourage continuous learning and quality program improvements and be a direct benefit to increasing wealth for all Ontarians. The paper starts with the community colleges' vision and action plan for apprenticeship training, and then responds to regulatory and strategic issues questions. Apprenticeship training is viewed as a value-added investment in people that enhances the skill level of the workforce. Key elements of an apprenticeship system are flexibility, access to further training, increased industry ownership of the programs, and industry-sanctioned recognition. The Communications and Marketing Branch of the Ministry of Education and Training estimates that by the year 2015 Ontario's labor force will change to include a higher participation rate by women and a significant increase in culturally diverse and visible minorities. This reformed system seeks to provide for successful learning opportunities for these new labor force entrants while providing current workers the skills necessary to operate new technologies. (JJL)

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ED 431 457

# Apprenticeship 2000: Ontario Community Colleges' Vision for the 21st Century

Association of Colleges and Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario

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**APPRENTICESHIP 2000**
**ONTARIO COMMUNITY COLLEGES' VISION**
**FOR THE 21ST CENTURY**

March 1997

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**The Council of Presidents of the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario are pleased to present a new vision for Apprenticeship in Ontario in response to the Ministry of Education and Training Discussion Paper on Apprenticeship Reform. As community-based institutions, Ontario's colleges are pivotal institutions for the delivery of apprenticeship training and are committed to assisting the Ministry in implementing reforms to the apprenticeship system.**

**A 21st century apprenticeship system must remove barriers. It must be employer-driven, encourage continuous learning and quality program improvements and be a direct benefit to increasing wealth for all Ontarians. Its competency-based outcome standards must be recognized internationally, highly responsive to employer needs and value add to the employment opportunities of apprentices. Creatively delivered, innovative programs accessible to all Ontarians, which advance opportunities for young people to successfully enter the labour market are critical elements to the cost effective and efficient evolution of the Ontario apprenticeship system.**

**Despite a high degree of frustration in coping with a complex web of rigid rules and requirements sanctioned by governments, Ontario's colleges remain strongly committed to apprenticeship and want to be a supportive partner in a reformed apprenticeship system. The colleges take pride in their demonstrated track record of providing top-quality education and training in response to changing industry demand and labour market trends. They operate most effectively working closely with employers, with clear mandates and in positive relationships with their communities. As pioneers in establishing linkages with other education sectors and the private sector, community colleges look forward to the challenge of working with industry, labour and government to implement reforms to the apprenticeship training system.**

**MARCH 1997 - ACAATO**

## INTRODUCTION

While the original meaning of apprenticeship was "to learn", over the years its common usage has been in reference to a specific clientele who were young, had obtained a relatively low level of formal education and wanted to acquire specific skills for employment in a specialized "blue collar" skilled occupations. These skill sets were usually narrowly focused and learned through a combination of theory and practical application. The success of the apprentice was determined through a mentoring process with certification awarded through the Province.

This system of providing skilled labour for a labour intensive industrial sector operated well in meeting the needs of industry, its divisions of work responsibilities, the career aspirations of individual Ontarians and the economic development goals of the Province.

Today the term apprenticeship can be applied to an increasing number of skilled occupations performed by "blue collar" and "white collar" employees. Many of these new

occupations require a solid foundation in literacy and numeracy skills, completion of advanced education and technology programs and an ability to function effectively as part of a team as the norm for meaningful career employment opportunities.

New global alliances will render old industry boundaries and narrowly focused skills obsolete. Sudden changes in the workplace and in division of work will continue to be driven by global competition. These realities will re-emphasize the need for solid partnership alliances which ensure the availability of highly skilled employees.

The Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario, established as a parallel, post-secondary system to universities, are mandated to provide community-based, responsive career education and training services which enhance community economic development. As Crown agencies, they share with the Ontario Government responsibility for ensuring the provincial workforce remains employable and globally competitive into the 21st century.

Community colleges represent a significant community-based resource positioned to provide solutions to future employability issues and to advancing the development of a provincial education and training framework inclusive of a reformed apprenticeship system.

In excess of 60% of current college enrollment are NOT direct entrants from the secondary school system. Former university students represent approximately 10% of this enrollment. With a student population averaging 26 years of age at 900 sites serving 200 communities Ontario's colleges are strongly committed to the pursuit of excellence in a client-focused learning environment. They promote accessible lifelong learning and are recognized as capable of delivering programs and services to ISO standards. In business ventures with 64 countries Ontario's colleges are being recognized for excellence in designing and providing superior quality career education and training services.

Public funded education and training services ensure accessibility and provide for accountability. The fundamental principles of funding stability, institutional diversity, flexibility, access and accountability provide the basic framework for the future direction of Ontario colleges. This framework is essential to a reformed apprenticeship system and to assisting colleges in achieving their career education and training mandate in this era of new funding, workplace and information technology challenges. As the primary delivery system for apprenticeship "in-school" training, in both English and French, colleges value prior learning successes, transferability of courses and portability of credentials. They continue to foster the concept of accreditation along a "seamless" continuum and the use of educational technology as an effective component of learning.

Reforming the present apprenticeship system is critical if it is to remain a key aspect in addressing current realities in the workplace and regarded by industry and clients as a responsive, cost effective and value-added investment in people for the future.

## Ontario's Workforce

Ontario has been well served by the development of the community colleges, the expansion of the university system and a well established apprenticeship system. These investments have produced one of the highest ratio's of workers with postsecondary education in the world and it has put Ontario in a position to take advantage of the growth in knowledge-based enterprises.

In re-examining the present composition of the provincial workforce and accounting for changing demographics and a projected growth rate of 2 million people over the next 20 years, several aspects emerge which must be addressed by a re-vitalized apprenticeship

system. Ontario's workforce represents 42% of the Canadian workforce. Participants include 27% who are foreign-born permanent residents, an estimated 13% visible minorities, 6% francophone, 2% Aboriginal peoples and 10% disabled.

This diversity, when coupled with recent research studies on literacy which found that 38% of Ontarians aged 16 and over experience difficulty in reading and writing skills needed in daily activities in the workplace and at home, presents some concern as to the ability of many of these workers to successfully access other employment. Today, employment growth is strongest in small businesses in the service sector. Many of these new career opportunities emphasize knowledge and the capacity to process information requiring a strong foundation in literacy and numeracy skills. Consequently, basic numeracy and literacy skills which allow apprentices to adapt to new and emerging technologies will be particularly important.

Most of the workforce participants in the next 20 years are already in the labour market. The maintenance of a skilled and functionally flexible labour force depend to a great extent on activities designed to renew and upgrade the skills of present workforce participants and adults returning to the workforce. The ability to provide skills training which encourages a satisfactory transition for workers from one sector to another and increases their flexibility and job mobility will be critical. Enhanced quality delivery results in value-added skill achievement consistent with the demands of new technologies.

*This paper follows the format of the Ministry of Education and Training Discussion Paper on Apprenticeship Reform. It proposes and supports changes to the apprenticeship system which will increase the value of future apprenticeship training and assist in strengthening Ontario's business, industry and citizens to prosper in the years ahead. It starts with the community colleges' vision for apprenticeship training and then responds to regulatory and strategic issues questions. A copy of the presentation made to the Ministry of Education and Training on March 10 by representatives of the Council of Presidents is attached as an appendix.*

## COMMUNITY COLLEGES' VISION OF APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Ontario's community colleges, an effective solution for the future employability of Ontarians, are committed to retaining apprenticeship training as an integral part of their core business and to further discussions on integrating direct client services into existing college infrastructure. Policies related to reforming apprenticeship must be developed within a provincial education and training framework that promotes lifelong learning as a social and economic priority. Colleges are supportive of an expanded workplace-based education and training strategy.

Apprenticeship training must be recognized as a value-added investment in people which enhances the skill level of the workforce in traditional and emerging occupations. It must be industry-driven and provided through new and innovative approaches to learning appropriate to an increasing and diverse workforce. Skills acquired must be portable, certifiable, take into account prior learning successes and be transferable to further learning opportunities which continue to build expertise, knowledge and employment opportunities in the future. This would assist in reducing the time lag in providing more appropriate skilled employees during boom/bust cycles.

In discharging its responsibilities to support the development of a highly skilled, globally competitive workforce, government must continue to adequately fund and publicly support the value of apprenticeship training. A publicly-funded apprenticeship training system which meets industry determined, competency-based outcomes, provides a vehicle for upgrading and re-training the current workforce and for youth to access the labour market in

a meaningful way would enhance government initiatives such as ***"Ontario, Canada: The Future is Right Here".***

In recognition of the urgent need for fiscal accountability government should not be expected to fund the full cost of apprenticeship training. Direct beneficiaries of this training should share a portion of the costs of their training in a market-driven system which could accommodate direct consumer demand. This significant change would assist the Ontario Government in offsetting the reduction in federal transfer payments for apprenticeship training. It would promote apprenticeship as a valuable mechanism in shaping a client's future employment opportunities while fostering in employers and employees an enhanced level of commitment. The sharing of apprenticeship training costs would increase the role of all major stakeholders in ensuring the relevancy of the training, the promotion and marketing of apprenticeship as a valued vehicle to employment through the development of meaningful partnership forums. Apprenticeship is a "wealth generator" which significantly impacts the economic development of the Province.

**Key Elements of an Apprenticeship System**

An effective apprenticeship system must provide:

- Flexibility through innovative approaches in program delivery to meet apprentice and employer "just-in-time" training needs; to improve cost-effective "in-school" training and to reduce the costs per student;
- Access to further training and certification for individuals with work experience or who meet established entry requirements. Barriers to youth entering an apprenticeship must be eliminated;
- Portability of apprenticeship credentials between training and education systems, training programs, employers, training institutions and jurisdictions;
- Increased investment in apprenticeship by all partners (provincial government, employers, unions, apprentices, training delivery agents) given the withdrawal of federal funding and resulting in a re-distribution of the funding of apprenticeship training;
- Increased industry ownership of apprenticeship programs;
- Industry sanctioned and internationally recognized competency-based outcome standards - for both "in-school" and "on-the-job" training - endorsed by government;
- Cost-effective administration which integrates client services with college resources and infrastructures, streamlines program management and enhances the perception of apprenticeship training as a value-added certification process for meaningful employment opportunities in traditional and emerging skilled occupations

**Community Colleges' Action Plan**

The colleges commit to working with the Ministry of Education and Training and other partners as appropriate:

- To recommend to the Ministry a process to ensure colleges lead the development and implementation of alternative delivery models by September 1, 1997.

- To determine the feasibility of colleges assuming responsibility for front line client services and recommend an appropriate course of action to the Ministry by November 1, 1997.

- To recommend to the Ministry a process for the implementation of a funding mechanism based on decisions resulting from the discussion on apprenticeship reform and which would come into effect during the 1998-99 fiscal year by December 01,

1997.

## THE LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

*What elements of the apprenticeship training system should continue to be addressed in legislation? What elements should be mandatory and consistent across all trades? For example, do the minimum duration and entry requirements for all programs need to be in legislation and the same for all trades?*

The elements of apprenticeship training which should be addressed in the legislative and regulatory framework are best identified by industry given that the primary role of colleges is to facilitate the development and delivery of curriculum for the "in-school" portion of apprenticeship training.

The colleges question the necessity of continuing to regulate minimum training durations and entry requirements to programs through legislation. Government policy, developed in consultation with apprenticeship partners, would be a more appropriate vehicle to deal with these issues and to accommodate the different academic competency requirements of existing and emerging new skilled occupations. In developing new and creative methods for the delivery of apprenticeship training which successfully enhances opportunities for apprentices to complete competency-based learning outcomes, the issue of duration becomes less important.

Similarly, issues related to entry requirements when viewed in the context of minimum "skill sets"/"academic competencies" (e.g.: basic mathematics, language, employability skills) required to successfully complete an apprenticeship program render the legislated "grade entry" requirement as obsolete.

*What elements of the system should be addressed in a general regulation and consistently applied across all trades? For example, should certification of qualified tradespeople be consistently required for all trades? How should training requirements be described in regulation?*

Regulations should be structured to provide unrestricted access to apprenticeship training for anyone wishing to pursue a career as an apprentice and who meets the minimum entry level standards determined by industry in both existing and emerging skilled occupations. Legislative priorities should be aligned to support the continued economic development of Ontario.

*What element of the system should be addressed in individual (either industry-specific or trade-specific regulations? For example should the compulsory or voluntary certification status of a trade be set by individual regulation?*

Industry is better positioned to respond more fully to this issue. However, colleges emphasize the need for flexibility to respond quickly to rapid changes in existing or new skilled occupations; for accessibility to immediate and future training opportunities and increased mobility for apprentices within the workplace and labour force.

*Are there alternatives to legislation that might be used to achieve key objectives related to industry involvement in setting standards, consumer protections, ensuring working health and safety, and monitoring the supply of skilled labour?*

Legislation is not required to ensure all key objectives related to industry involvement are met including setting standards, consumer protection, ensuring worker health and safety and monitoring the supply of skilled labour. As an alternative, government could develop appropriate policies in consultation with its major partners and enforce those policies. Government should carefully review and determine which issues would be better captured in legislation or policy. Areas such as curriculum development or the delivery of "on-the-job" or "in-school" training could be adequately captured in policy. Similarly, issues related to the establishment of common and consistent criteria for approval of training delivery agents, standards of quality assurance and minimum standards of training delivery could be handled in a more flexible manner through the enforcement of government policy.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN SYSTEM MANAGEMENT

*Which apprenticeship services need to be directly delivered by the Ontario government? What mechanisms are possible to ensure effective and financially accountable program delivery?*

The Ontario government should remain accountable for the establishment of occupational standards, quality assurance, regulatory compliance, accreditation of training providers, funding, marketing and promoting apprenticeship, certification against program standards, provincial registrations and licensing, maintaining a registry of certificate of qualification holders and linkages with inter-provincial and national agreements (i.e. Red Seal Certification).

*Industry, both business and labour, plays a significant role today in managing the system, through its involvement on PACs and in setting standards. What other aspects of apprenticeship training might benefit from increased industry influence and involvement? Are there additional functions that industry is uniquely qualified to perform?*

The effective promotion of apprenticeship opportunities, by all major partners, as an recognized and credible opportunity for future employment would enhance the perception of career potential for young people and emphasize the relevance of apprenticeship training in today's marketplace. It would also serve to emphasize the need for credentialling beyond secondary school in today's job markets.

Business and labour could play an enhanced role in the establishment and maintenance of training partnerships to ensure curriculum relevance and maintain instructor credibility. With the rapid pace of technological change and the difficulty experienced by training deliverers in maintaining state-of-the-art facilities, loans/donations of equipment, sharing of expertise, opportunities for faculty upgrading and use of training materials for "on-the-job" and "in-school" training represent important and essential contributions by industry.

Industry could undertake an enhanced role in ensuring quality assurance for "on-the-job" training within a provincial education and training framework established by government in consultation with all major partners and incorporating lifelong learning opportunities. More active participation from industry would be welcomed in the areas of curriculum development and in the design and development of alternative delivery models.

Closer linkages including an enhanced communications strategy must be developed between local apprenticeship committees and provincial advisory committees as well as with Employer and Trade Associations and Sectoral Councils.

Provision for apprentices to express their views and provide advice on issues related to accessibility, support services and student services should be made available at the local and

provincial committee levels.

Industry could initiate discussions with its workforce to determine an appropriate number of training days per year to be established for training activities. The type of training to be obtained would be determined jointly.

*Ontario's community college network is well-positioned to assume more responsibility for some aspects of apprenticeship program delivery, in addition to in-school training. Which aspects of program delivery could be assumed by the college system?*

Apprenticeship is an integral part of the community colleges' core business. Colleges have the infrastructure and resources to assume responsibility for some of the front line client services such as: promotion, marketing, planning, registration, scheduling and administration of the examination process. All of the functions currently handled by ministry field offices, with the exception of enforcement, could be assimilated into college operations. These functions are currently offered within all colleges.

In some instances colleges may be able to provide simulated work experiences for apprentices in certain trade areas where the workplace can be adequately duplicated within the institution. The effect of this strategy would be to alleviate the imposition of "on-the-job" training in smaller shops; help eliminate the effects of boom/bust cycles in the economy and assist in reducing some of the skill shortages which plague industry.

Colleges could increase their curriculum development initiatives and alternate modes of delivery in cooperation with industry. Financial assistance to support the development of quality programs to meet the needs of apprentices and employers could be obtained through the "Strategic Program Investment Fund" managed by the Colleges Branch of the Ministry of Education and Training.

Further discussion on these issues are required with the Ministry of Education and Training at the conclusion of the apprenticeship reform process.

*In what areas of their training program could/should individual apprentices be asked to assume greater responsibility?*

Apprentices should be required to pay some of the costs of their training and held accountable for their own performance. They must be prepared to commit to learning on their own time if they want to take advantage of learning opportunities offered through distance education. This accountability would include ensuring they have mastered the prerequisites for entry to apprenticeship training and completing the expected outcomes of the program in which they are enrolled. Most students currently enrolled in college programs accept full responsibility for meeting their program objectives. Many students work part-time while attending college full-time and maintaining family responsibilities. Apprentices should seek active involvement on local and provincial apprenticeship committees.

## FUNDING

*What in your view are the costs and benefits of the alternative funding models described above?*

The *fee-payer model* provides for training providers charging the full cost of in-school training, and associated services, to apprenticeship clients. Apprenticeship training is expensive and becomes more so in specific program areas which are technology-driven. To

expect apprentices to shoulder the full costs of their in-school training would be prohibitive and could be viewed as financially discriminatory relative to other training and education funding models.

The *tuition-based model* is a workable model as it provides for apprentices paying for a portion of their in-school training costs and some additional administration services. Payment of tuition fees would enhance the motivation and commitment level of apprentices and align apprenticeship more closely with traditional postsecondary programming. Apprentices should have access to financial aid systems such as OSAP.

The *grant-based model* would maintain the current system where government is wholly responsible for the costs of delivering client services and apprenticeship training. However, experience has demonstrated that funding stability is not achieved with this model. Federal transfer payments to Ontario are expected to be terminated effective March 31, 1999.

The *loans-based model* incorporates some elements of the fee-payer approach where clients pay the full cost of training and services, but integrates a loan system to financially assist clients to take training. This model aligns apprenticeship training more closely to other postsecondary models and would build student commitment.

However, apprentices would complete their training with a significant debt. Current difficulties in collecting OSAP payments illustrate the problems inherent in such a system. A similar situation could be expected to emerge if this model was put into effect.

**The *cost-shared model* is the most preferred model as it represents a balanced solution with government participation through partial grants and loans, and client participation through payment of training costs. Employer groups would be encouraged to contribute their share either directly through "in kind" contribution or in financially assisting apprentices with their tuition costs.**

Apprenticeship training benefits employers through providing skilled employees; government through contributing to the economic development of the province and apprentices through providing an opportunity to increase future revenue potential. All three should financially support this training. However, colleges recognize there could be circumstances where government, the employer or the apprentice may want to pay the total cost of the apprenticeship training.

*Are there changes in the delivery system that should accompany changes to the funding model?*

Changes in the funding model need to be accompanied by a number of changes in the delivery of apprenticeship programs to accommodate enhanced access to training and the changing realities of the workplace. A period of transition is required which can be jointly determined with the Ministry of Education and Training. We suggest the following:

- Development of alternative delivery methods utilizing educational technologies which allow apprentices to access the theoretical portions of their training in a manner suitable to lifestyle and employment commitments and accommodates a number of learning styles. Although the development process is expensive introduction of distance education and computer-based learning for example, could introduce economies in the delivery of apprenticeship training and reduce the cost per student.

- Removal of the necessity for a contract of apprenticeship with an employer prior to the commencement of training. Employment pre-requisites currently attached to apprenticeship training make it difficult for apprentices to access training in periods of economic decline. They contribute to skilled shortages which have plagued

industry for some time. Construction Labour Schools providing apprenticeship training which compliments college apprenticeship activities do not require an employment contract prior to a trainee commencing training.

- Closer integration with the Ministry of Education and Training to incorporate some elements more traditionally associated with postsecondary programming - the introduction of pre-apprenticeship training programs to ensure that apprentices are fully prepared for their area of study.

- Modularization of training curriculum is required to provide flexibility in learning and delivery. Common core curriculums could be developed in the event trades were re-defined into more comprehensive clusters. Delivery of common core curriculum would become more cost effective and increase career and employment choices for apprentices. Centralized control of the common core curriculum works to the lowest common denominator. More industry driven, locally controlled curriculum is necessary.

- Assessment and recognition of prior learning based on work experience for credit towards completion of apprenticeship training. Community colleges are the only sector positioned to provide this service in a manner which enhances further education and training opportunities.

*What is the appropriate role for the Ontario government in funding apprenticeship?*

Government has a vital role in ensuring the maintenance of a viable apprenticeship system and provincial training infrastructure. The Ontario government should continue to strongly support apprenticeship training as an essential element in the economic development of the Province; as a vehicle to assist government in its responsibility to ensure Ontario's workforce is obtaining skills which are globally competitive and as a highly valued mechanism to enhance the employability of individual Ontarians.

The Ontario government should join with its other partners in marketing apprenticeship as an effective method to gain meaningful entry to Ontario's labour market. It should provide adequate funding to meet the advanced training needs of some trades and allocate other funds to respond to developing trends in skill trade areas supporting Ontario's economic growth.

Government should ensure enhanced access to apprenticeship training through funding pre-apprenticeship programs and through providing financial stability to eliminate problems associated with reliance on transfer payments and boom/bust cycles which aggravate skill shortages.

Further, Government should increase its efforts to facilitate collaboration and encourage a pro-active stance from industry in support of apprenticeship through a tax credit for employers who hire or train new apprentices. This proposed tax credit could be similar to the one currently operating in support of college coop placements.

## LINKAGES

*How can apprenticeship improve youth employment prospects? How can apprenticeship be more strongly linked with the secondary and postsecondary education system?*

There needs to be a seamless link between secondary and postsecondary study at all levels so apprentices can move forward on a learning pathway which supports lifelong learning. The following strategies are suggested as initial steps in accomplishing this goal:

- Promotion of apprenticeship training at the secondary and postsecondary levels;
- Market apprenticeship training as a means for youth to obtain skills and experience which facilitates their entry to the labour market. The current structures of apprenticeship do not support youth seeking first time employment;
- Expand articulation arrangements with other education sectors;
- Expand efforts to integrate traditional postsecondary technician/technology training to apprenticeship programs and vice versa as well as "off-the-job-learning" outcomes with related postsecondary programs. Some interesting models already exist.

For instance, Mohawk College in cooperation with government developed a dual certification model with Dofasco which enabled industrial maintenance mechanics and industrial electricians to earn their certificate of apprenticeship in their specific trade area together with a Mohawk College technician diploma in fluid power and electrical systems respectively.

Such a model represents an economical approach to enhanced training opportunities, providing enhanced practical training for technicians and theoretical training for apprentices at no extra cost. It also presents advantages for trainees through eliminating the current 'dead end' aspect of apprenticeship training and supporting the concept of lifelong learning which is vital to the future of Ontario and the country as a whole.

Another example of the potential effectiveness of this type of innovation is demonstrated in the cooperative partnership undertaken by several Ontario colleges with the Canadian Steel Industry. The objective of this partnership was to provide education and training opportunities to steel industry employees. Through development of common core curriculum and recognition of prior learning experiences, acquired both formally and informally, new and expanded learning opportunities were made available to steel industry employees. After successfully completing clearly identified learning outcomes employees can continue to access new learning opportunities through 19 colleges/cegeps/institutes located in 6 Provinces. The net effect of this initiative is expected to increase the educational and skills level of the workforce and value-add to the product lines of the industry. In addition, employees retain their mobility, increase their flexibility to industry, enhance their self-esteem as individuals and continue to access education and training programs at different points in their lives.

A further example can be highlighted in the initiative of the Ontario colleges to adapt prior learning assessment mechanisms for use in apprenticeship training. Algonquin College, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Training and the Ottawa-Carleton high tech manufacturing industry is developing a prior learning assessment (PLA) model for apprenticeship. The model includes a portfolio development course, guidelines for the development of challenge instruments, sample challenge tests, demonstration-of-the-skills test, workplace skill recognition mechanisms, guidelines and training for PLA assessors. This PLA model is unique in that it enables the assessment and recognition of the prior learning of apprentices for credit against BOTH the "in-school" and "on-the-job" training components of their apprenticeship programs. Industry is a full partner helping to establish all guidelines and instruments, referring apprentices for assessment and providing PLA assessors.

Expanded linkages to school boards. The feasibility of integrating secondary school apprentices in small numbers to regular apprenticeship classes offered by the colleges

should be investigated. This would add an element of challenge for secondary students which would make apprenticeship training more appealing and provide students with a realistic view of the trade. Eventually these positives could generate more interest in apprenticeship at the secondary school level. The opportunity to interact with field-experienced apprentices in an up-to-date, well-equipped facility would offer significant enhancement to the training of potential apprentices from secondary schools.

Additional examples of linkages, which are representative of the many innovative initiatives undertaken in this area and which could be used as models include:

- the Durham College Youth Internship Program
- the St. Clair College, University of Windsor and Chrysler Corporation "Benchmarking" Experiment

*How can we improve cross-accreditation opportunities and procedures and the probability of schooling and work experience between programs and institutions?*

The current definition of an apprenticeable trade is too narrow and does not reflect the realities of the real workplace. To improve cross-accreditation, and enhanced portability, the following is recommended:

- **Increased emphasis on Credit for Prior Learning.** Mechanisms are already in place within the college system for recognizing valuable work experience. These opportunities need to be integrated into the apprenticeship training system. The use of exemption testing should be expanded.
- **Closer, inter-system integration.** The gap between postsecondary, trades training and the secondary school should be closed. The introduction of a "credit-tracking" system, similar to the Continuing Education Unit approach in use in some educational jurisdictions, would enable apprentices and journey persons to "bank" educational credits, grouped as "majors" or "minors", for example, which could be used in support of a lifelong learning path.
- **Development of common core curriculum at the BASIC level for related trades.** Besides facilitating a degree of economy in the delivery of in-school portions of apprenticeship training, the introduction of a common core curriculum would facilitate lateral moves on the part of apprentices and support the development of a "multiskilling" focus.

*How can apprenticeship training further promote economic growth and job creation in Ontario?*

In today's workplaces, there are few career ladders. Workers must be prepared to move laterally to enhance their participation in the work force. To enable trades persons to move easily and accommodate these workplace realities, apprenticeship training should provide a solid foundation in generic skills and in development of clusters of employment strengths to support multiskilling and advancement into new career opportunities.

In addition, apprenticeship training should maintain a focus on trade areas where skill shortages have been identified or trades which are tied to the development of new technologies. Creation of new apprenticeship programs related to emerging technologies should be a priority.

## SUMMARY

The Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario support changes to the current structure of apprenticeship training which are designed to enhance the flexibility and ability of workers to successfully adjust and cope with rapid change in the workplace and labour market. Apprenticeship reforms must:

- ensure the system is employer-driven and enhances partnership alliances
- enhance unrestricted access and provide for effective promotion and marketing of apprenticeship training
- expand the system to include new skilled occupations
- encourage responsive, relevant and cost effective training which reduces the cost per student
- promote continuous quality improvement and innovative program delivery
- reduce complexity of operations and simplify roles and responsibilities
- enhance direct college linkages with business and industry
- streamline up-front client services
- provide for continuous and progressive learning opportunities.

The Communications and Marketing Branch of the Ministry of Education and Training estimates that by the year 2015 Ontario's labour force will change to include a higher participation rate by women and a significant increase in culturally diverse and visible minorities. A reformed apprenticeship system must provide for successful learning opportunities for these new labour force entrants while at the same time providing current workers the skills necessary to operate new technologies.

Apprenticeship is a critical element to increasing the capacity of Ontario's economy to create wealth. It provides a process for improving the quality of the workforce which in turn value-adds to increased productivity. Ontario's community colleges look forward to the challenges ahead and working co-operatively with all major partners to ensure reforms are implemented and apprenticeship continues to significantly impact the economic development of Ontario.

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